

ROCK TOMB AT GHAJN QAJJET, NEAR RABAT, MALTA

(Plates XII–XIV)

(i) THE TOMB AND ITS CONTENTS

ON the 22nd September, 1950, whilst workmen were digging a trench for the laying of a water main at Ghajn Qajjet, near Rabat, Malta (Malta 2" Map. Ref. 356247) at a depth of 2 ft. 8 in. below the surface of the road, the burial chamber of a rock-cut tomb was broken into (fig. 1).

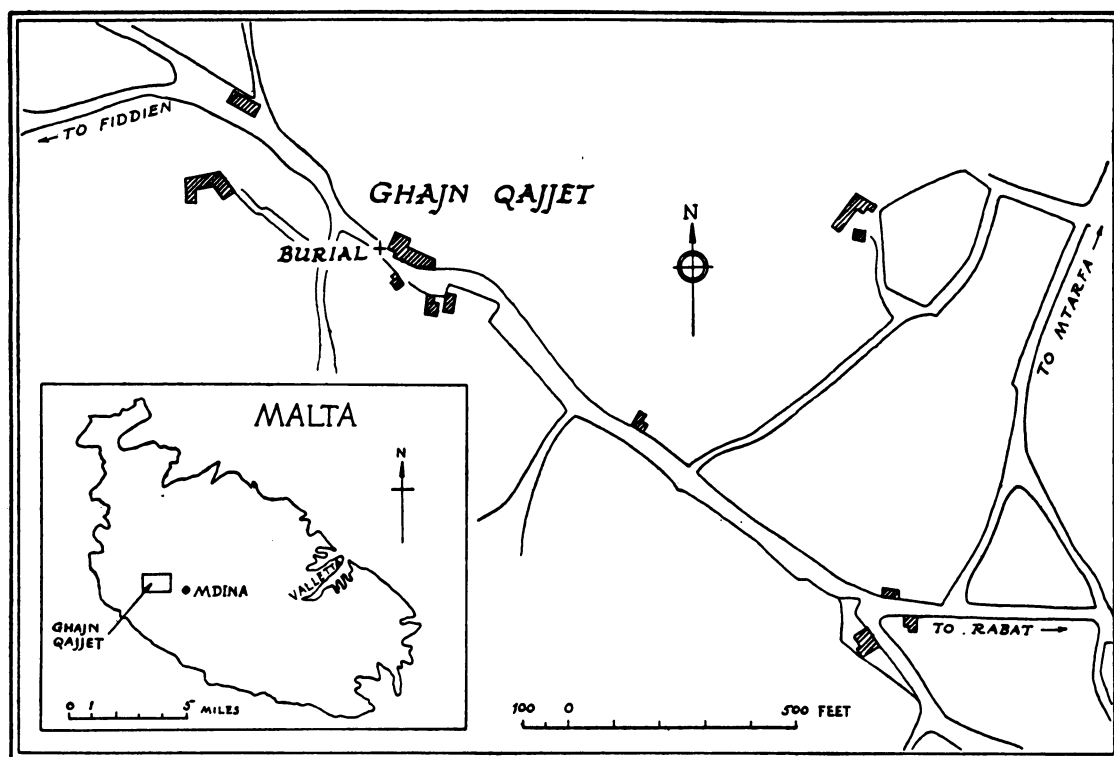


FIG. 1.

This chamber (fig. 2), rectangular in plan and with a flat ceiling, measured 12 ft. in length, 10 ft. in width, and 5 ft. 7 in. in height; its long axis ran in a north-easterly direction. A slab of Globigerina limestone (pl. XII), 6 ft. 5 in. long, 5 ft. 8 in. wide, and 5 in. thick, rested horizontally on the floor and was set with two of its sides in contact with the north-east and the south-east walls; owing to the slight inclination of the floor, being higher towards the north-east, it was propped up by roughly dressed small blocks of stone. There was also a cavity, 10 in. in diameter and 6 in. deep, cut in the

floor at a distance of 4 in. from the south-west side of the stone slab and quite close to the south-east wall of the chamber.

Access to the burial chamber was originally gained through a rectangular entrance, 5 ft. 7 in. high, 4 ft. 3 in. wide, and 1 ft. 10 in. deep, having its sill on a level with

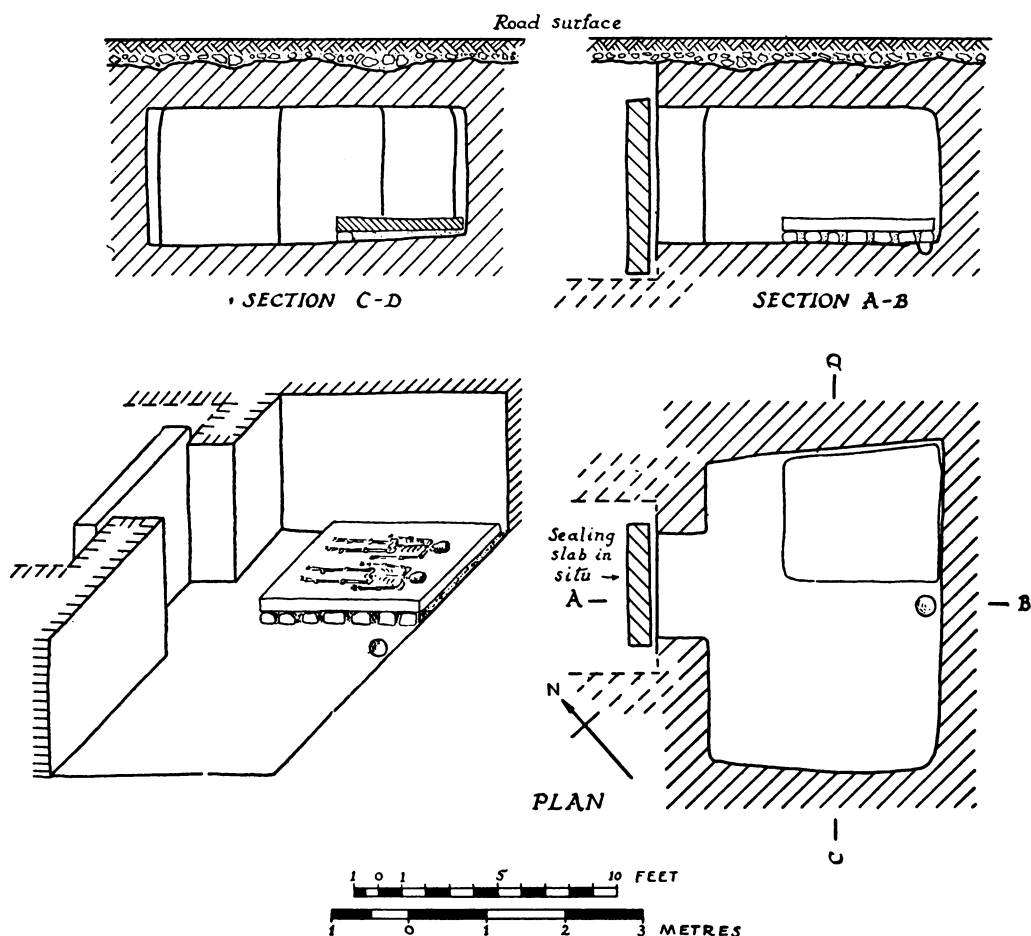


FIG. 2.

that of the floor of the chamber; it was eccentrically situated in the north-west wall, being nearer to the north corner of the chamber. The massive sealing-slab was still in position on the outer side of the entrance. The region beyond the blocking stone, presumably a rectangular shaft, was not explored as it extended across the main road.

On the platform in the burial chamber were lying side by side, in an extended, supine position, two very fragile human skeletons having their skulls pointing towards the south-east; they belonged to two adults of different sex, the female being placed on the right of the male. Other organic remains, consisting of animal ribs, pieces of a

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sacrum and six caudal vertebrae belonging to an ox, were heaped on the floor near the middle of the south-west side of the platform.

Fragments of five plain bracelets, one of bronze and the others of silver, and a complete silver ring were recovered from near the right forearm of the female skeleton. Between the two skeletons were found, at the level of the forearms, fragments of two plain bracelets, one of bronze and the other of silver, three incomplete silver rings and a bead of microcline feldspar. Four key-shaped iron loops (pl. XIII, *b*), one slightly damaged, with incrustations of mineralised wood on their stem, were found, one on

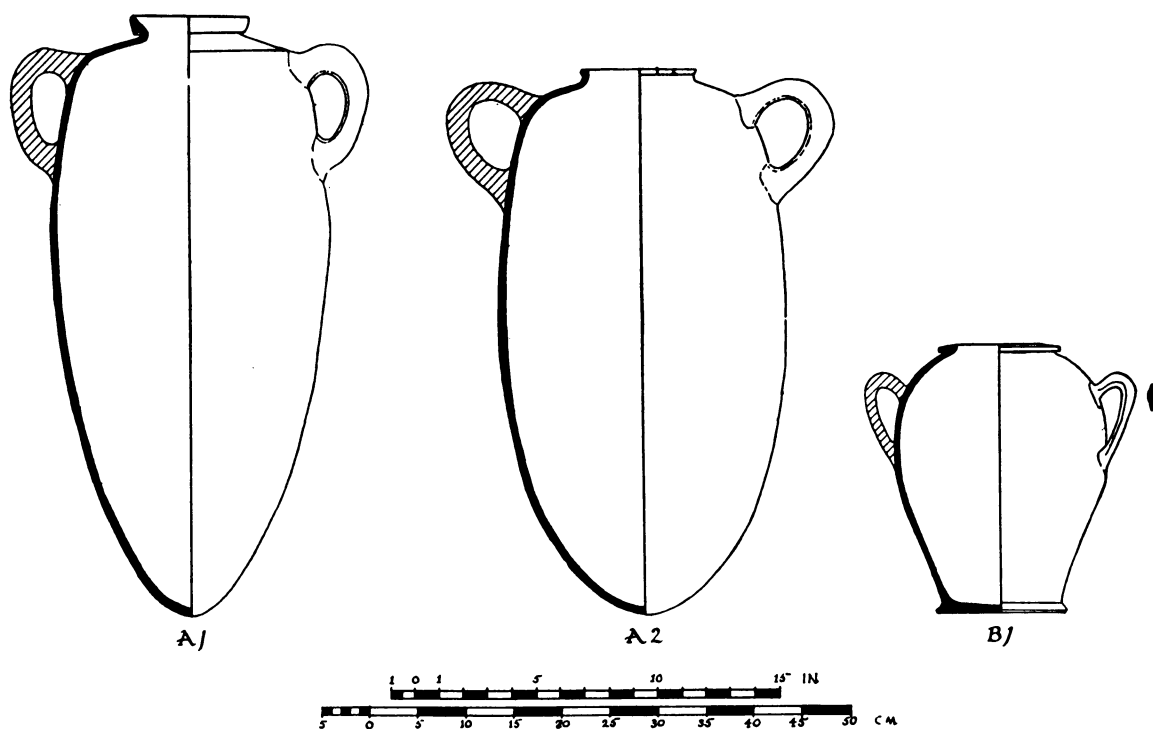


FIG. 3.

each side of the skull and two near the feet of the male skeleton; they probably served as handles for taking ropes in order to lower the coffin into the tomb. It is possible that some of these objects might have been shifted from their original position by the impact of collapsed parts of the ceiling.

The following objects were found heaped on the floor near the south-east wall of the burial chamber:

Terra-cotta.

Three amphorae:

- (a) ht. 25 in.; damaged. Fig. 3, A 1.
- (b) ht. 22 in. Fig. 3, A 2.
- (c) ht. 22 in. As fig. 3, A 2.

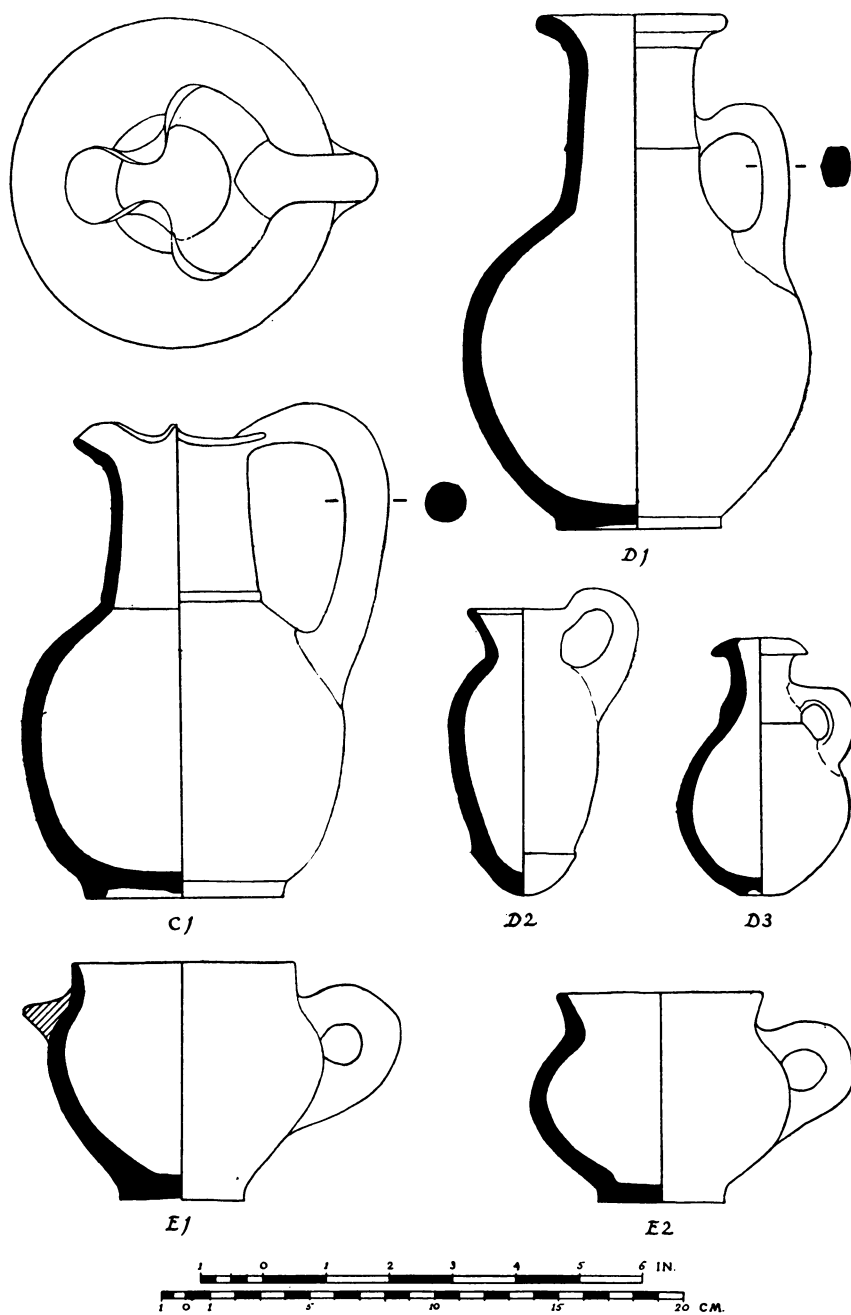


FIG. 4.

One urn containing calcined human bones:

ht. $11\frac{1}{2}$ in.; damaged. Fig. 3, B 1.

One oinochoë, ht. $7\frac{3}{4}$ in. Fig. 4, C 1.

Four jugs:

- (a) ht. 8 in. Fig. 4, D 1.
- (b) ht. $7\frac{3}{4}$ in. As fig. 4, D 1.
- (c) ht. $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. Fig. 4, D 2.
- (d) ht. 4 in. Fig. 4, D 3.

Four single-handled cups:

- (a) ht. $3\frac{3}{4}$ in., max. d. $4\frac{1}{4}$ in. Fig. 4, E 1.
- (b) ht. $3\frac{1}{4}$ in., max. d. $4\frac{1}{4}$ in. As fig. 4, E 1.
- (c) ht. $3\frac{1}{4}$ in., max. d. $4\frac{1}{4}$ in. As fig. 4, E 1.
- (d) ht. $3\frac{1}{4}$ in., max. d. 4 in. Fig. 4, E 2.

Two two-handled cups:

- (a) ht. $2\frac{3}{8}$ in., max. d. $4\frac{3}{4}$ in., decorated with red lines and bands. Fig. 5, F 1; pl. XIV, b). See further pp. 39–41.
- (b) ht. $2\frac{1}{4}$ in., max. d. 5 in., decorated with ducks and geometrical patterns in black. Fig. 5, F 2; pl. XIV, c. See further pp. 39–41.

Three dishes:

- (a) d. $5\frac{1}{2}$ in., with three flat triangular supports attached vertically to the underside near the rim, at equal distances from each other. Fig. 5, G 1.
- (b) d. 5 in. Fig. 5, G 2.
- (c) d. $4\frac{3}{4}$ in. Fig. 5, G 3.

Twelve plates:

- (a) d. $9\frac{1}{2}$ in.; damaged. Fig. 5, H 1.
- (b) d. $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. As fig. 5, H 3.
- (c) d. $7\frac{1}{4}$ in. As fig. 5, H 3.
- (d) d. 7 in., containing a fish vertebra. As fig. 5, H 3.
- (e) d. 7 in. As fig. 5, H 3.
- (f) d. 7 in. As fig. 5, H 3.
- (g) d. $6\frac{3}{4}$ in. Fig. 5, H 2.
- (h) d. $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. Fig. 5, H 3.
- (i), (j), (k), and (l) damaged.

Four bilychnis lamps:

- (a) max. d. $5\frac{1}{2}$ in., used. Fig. 5, I 1.
- (b) max. d. 5 in., used. As fig. 5, I 1.
- (c) max. d. 5 in., used. As fig. 5, I 1.
- (d) max. d. 5 in., used. As fig. 5, I 1.

An object having the shape of a truncated cone, open at both ends and with everted rims: Ht. $2\frac{1}{2}$ in., max. d. $4\frac{1}{2}$ in., min. d. 4 in., decorated with red horizontal bands. Fig. 5, J 1.

Bronze.

The top of a lamp-stand, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. in height (pl. XIII, a; fig. 6). The foot is evidently intended to be fitted over a wooden stem.

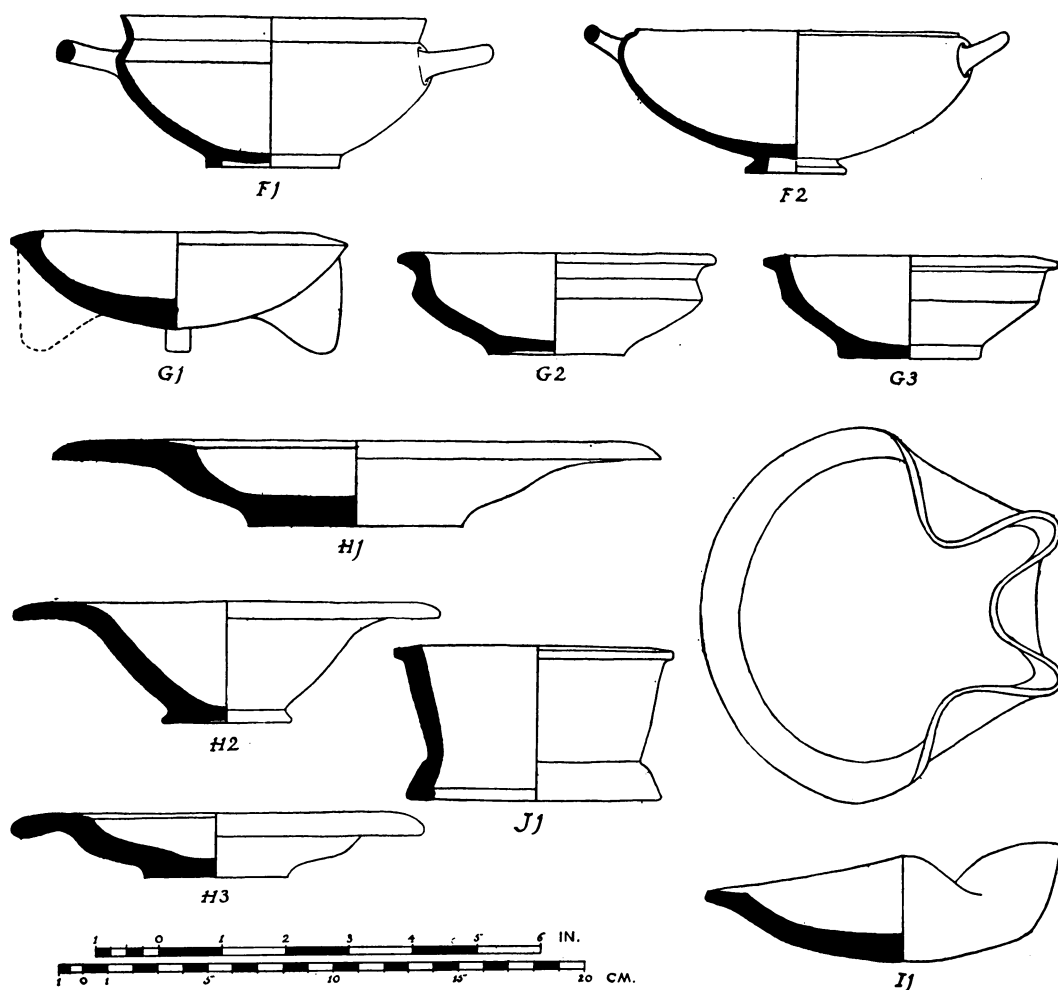


FIG. 5.

According to Mr. W. L. Brown of the Ashmolean Museum this type of specimen seems to be Cypriot of the sixth century, but might have begun in the early seventh. He cites the following representative list of parallels:

- Cyprus*: Murray, *Exc. in Cyprus*, 102, fig. 148.6 (Amathus grave 84, multiple, but surviving objects seem 6th century B.C.); *ibid.* 67, fig. 88 (Curium, grave 73).
 Richter, *Cat. Metr. Mus. Bronzes*, 366 ff. nos. 1270-8 (Cesnola Collection: = Myres, *Cesnola Handbook*, nos. 4965 ff.; *Cesnola Atlas III*, pl. LI. 3.)
 Louvre, unpublished (quoted by Blinkenberg, see below).

Sidon: Ohnefalsch-Richter, *Kypros*, pl. 43. 8.

Hamdy Bey-Reinach, *Nécropole royale à Sidon*, 90, fig. 35; *Jdl* 1894, 207, fig. 1 (5th century grave).

Rhodes: Blinkenberg, *Lindos, Petits objets*, pl. 27, nos. 671-3, pp. 207-9.

Etruria: *Museo Gregoriano I*, pl. 48, 2 (Cervetri; illustrated upside down).

Sardinia: Cagliari 22932 (quoted by Blinkenberg).

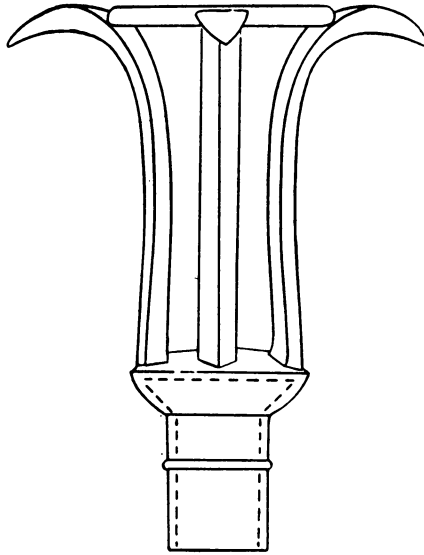


FIG. 6.

The objects recovered from over the platform were the following:

Silver.

Five bracelets:

- (a) Elliptical, max. d. $2\frac{3}{4}$ in., circular section, $\frac{1}{8}$ in. in thickness; in fragments.
- (b) Elliptical, max. d. 3 in., circular section, $\frac{1}{8}$ in. in thickness; in fragments.
- (c) Elliptical, max. d. $2\frac{3}{4}$ in., circular section, $\frac{1}{8}$ in. in thickness; a fragment.
- (d) Circular section, $\frac{1}{8}$ in. in thickness; a fragment.
- (e) Circular section, $\frac{1}{8}$ in. in thickness; a fragment.

Four rings:

- (a) d. 1 in., circular section, $\frac{1}{8}$ in. in thickness.
- (b) d. $1\frac{1}{8}$ in., circular section, $\frac{1}{8}$ in. in thickness; a fragment.
- (c) Circular section, $\frac{1}{8}$ in. in thickness; a fragment.
- (d) Circular section, $\frac{1}{8}$ in. in thickness; a fragment.

Bronze.

Two bracelets:

- (a) Circular, d. $2\frac{3}{4}$ in., circular section, $\frac{3}{16}$ in. in thickness; in fragments.
- (b) Circular, d. $2\frac{1}{2}$ in., circular section, $\frac{3}{16}$ in. in thickness; in fragments.

Iron.

Four loops, key-shaped, average length $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. (pl. XIII, *b*); see p. 34.

Microcline feldspar.

A bead, barrel-shaped, pale green, max. d. $\frac{7}{16}$ in. and $\frac{9}{16}$ in. in length. This mineral does not occur in Malta.

From the material found in the burial chamber it appears that this rock tomb was used at two different periods. Originally, it served for inhumation, not later than the sixth century B.C., as indicated by the type of lamp-stand and Greek vases. Subsequently, an intrusive cremation burial took place. A date in the second century B.C. is suggested by the type of cinerary urn, which is so dated by Dr. D. B. Harden and by M. P. Cintas (*Céramique punique*, p. 131).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to put on record my thanks to Mr. C. G. Zammit, for his help in the field and for preparing the photographs and drawings with which this article is illustrated; to Dr. D. B. Harden and Mr. W. L. Brown for their comments on the Punic pottery and on the bronze lamp-stand respectively; to Mr. T. J. Dunbabin, who has kindly furnished the note on the imported Greek vases that follows the present note; and to the Director of the British School at Rome for his many helpful suggestions in the course of preparing the article.

J. G. BALDACCHINO

(ii) THE GREEK VASES

The publication of this well-recorded tomb-group is of especial value because of the presence of two Greek vases, interesting both for themselves and as a contribution to the more precise dating of the Punic vases found with them. I therefore welcome the opportunity to comment on these Greek vases. As I have not seen them, I quote Mr. Ward Perkins' description of fabric:

1. Fig. 5, F 1; pl. XIV, *b*. 'Pale yellow clay, covered with a rich chestnut-red paint with a darker band at shoulder. Reserved are: bottom and inside of foot-ring; ground of decoration at and above shoulder. The pot had been considerably used in antiquity and the ornament has come away from the ground in many places.'

2. Fig. 5, F 2; pl. XIV, *c*. 'A fine, hard, light ware, about 2 mm. thick at the shoulder. Ground a pale buff, with darker paint ranging from almost dead black to brown. Interior: black except for reserved central medallion, $2\frac{1}{2}$ cm. diam. Exterior: base and inside of foot reserved.'

1. This cup may, to judge from photograph and description, be Corinthian, but I should not like to say so definitely without seeing it. The most probable alternative is Cycladic (a similarly decorated Cycladic cup, *Délos* xv, pl. 27, 23).

For cups of this type at Corinth cf. S. S. Weinberg, *Corinth* vii, i, 46, on no. 157. This appears to be earlier than any of those quoted, on account of its broader foot, shallow convex bowl, and less sharply offset lip. Its profile is in these respects nearer to

the earlier cup *Perachora* i, pl. 12. 1, 121. 1 (first half of the eighth century). The heavy fabric, as well as the profile, suggests that this belongs to the eighth century. The decoration is common in sub-geometric of the seventh century, at Corinth and elsewhere, but is not unknown on simple vases of certain eighth-century date.

Some time in the second half of the eighth century is the most likely date for this cup, but the early seventh century cannot be excluded, particularly if, as is possible, it is not a Corinthian vase, but the product of some other Greek fabric.

Protocorinthian and Corinthian vases of a later date than this are not infrequent in Malta. Most of them are drinking vessels of common shapes. Those known to me are:

- (i) Kotyle (skyphos), as K. Friis Johansen, *Les vases sicyoniens*, pl. 9. 6; not later than first quarter of seventh century. For the grave see *Museum Annual Report*, 1923–24, p. 3.¹
- (ii) Cup (not skyphos, as is called by Peet and Johansen) of first half of seventh century: T. E. Peet, *JHS* 1912, 96 ff.; Johansen, *op. cit.*, 88 ff.
- (iii) Aryballos of middle or third quarter of seventh century, in Amsterdam: *CVA Scheurleer Coll.* i, III C, pl. 1. 4.
- (iv) Pyxis lid² of last quarter of seventh century, now in Museum of Roman Antiquities at Rabat, Malta: A. Mayr, *Sitzungsberichte der Münchener Akademie*, 1905, 493; Peet, *loc. cit.*, 97, fig. 3; H. Payne, *Necrocorinthia*, p. 292, no. 664.
- (v) Early Corinthian kotyle decorated with large rosettes, of end of seventh century or, possibly, beginning of sixth: see *Museum Annual Report*, 1926–27, p. 8.¹

2. A cup of East Greek type, conventionally called bird-bowl; see K. F. Kinch, *Vroulia*, 133 ff.; *Délos* xv, pll. 47–8, nos. 17–35; E. R. Price, *JHS* 1924, 184 ff.; *Classification des céramiques antiques: East Greek Pottery*, p. 1; M. Robertson, *JHS* 1940, 14 ff. This belongs to the 'transitional' group distinguished by Robertson, and like *Délos* cit., nos. 23–27, has a black base and a row of dots below the picture. Others with both black base and row of dots are Oxford, *CVA* ii, pl. 1. 6; Oxford 1935. 849, from Kamiros (base lost); Aigina, *AM* 1897, 272, fig. 7; Ithaca, *BSA* xliii, pl. 44, nos. 576 and 577; Tarsus, *AJA* 1938, 44, fig. 33. The bowl from Tarsus, as Robertson mentions, was found with an aryballos of the first quarter of the seventh century, a Rhodian imitation of a Protocorinthian type; it looks earlier than the bowl from Malta. This will belong to the second quarter or the middle of the seventh century. Its design is rougher than the exquisite bird-bowls of the second half of the century; this may be due either to an earlier date or to an unprogressive workshop.

The centre of manufacture of these bird-bowls is Rhodes, but they are commonly believed to have been made also in other East Greek cities. The clay varies, and a number show the pale yellow clay of the vase from Malta. Among those with yellow clay are (I follow published descriptions for the most part):

Syracuse, from Gela; *MA* xvii, 247–8, fig. 186.

Rhégion: *NdS* 1914, 210, fig. 2.

Vatican, from Caere, Regolini-Galassi Tomb: Pinza, *RM* xxii, 132, no. 227 and

¹ I owe my knowledge of (i) and (v), and information about these and (iv), to notes and photographs kindly sent by Dr. Baldacchino.

A pyxis and lid of the first half or middle of the seventh century, and sixth-century Corinthian vases found in

Malta, are also described by Mayr, *loc. cit. supra*.

² Lid of a kotyle-pyxis, of the shape of *Necrocorinthia*, pp. 295 ff., nos. 700–6 A (cf. R. J. Hopper, *BSA* xlv, pp. 223 ff.), as Professor A. D. Trendall has observed.

p. 131, fig. 20; Albizzati, *I vasi dipinti del Vaticano*, pl. 1, 21; L. Pareti, *La Tomba Regolini-Galassi*, pl. 49, 381.

Florence, from Vetulonia, Tomba del Duce: *CVA* i, III C a, pl. 1. 5.

From Vulci: Gsell, *Fouilles de Vulci*, XII. 8; LII. 21.

Rhodes, Ialysos LXII; *Clara Rhodos* iii, 105, fig. 99; *CVA Rodi* ii, II D e, pl. 6. 1.

Rhodes, Kamiros, Macri Langoni CXLIII, *Cl. Rh.* iv, 274, fig. 301; *CVA cit.*, pl. 6. 5.

Thera: *Thera* ii, 74, no. 33.

Yellow clay is not typical of Rhodes, but it may be that those bird-bowls of that colour found there were made there; or it may be that all the yellow bird-bowls were made in some other place or places, as yet undefined, in the East Greek area. The bowl found in Malta, though somewhat rough, seems to be of East Greek origin. Many bird-bowls have been found in Sicily and Italy. In addition to those already mentioned from Gela, Rhegion, Caere, Vetulonia, and Vulci many have been found in Syracuse (*MA* xxv, 490, fig. 82 and 531, fig. 118; *NdS* 1925, 202, fig. 37 and p. 319; *AdI* 1877, pl. CD 5); others at Narce (Montelius, *Civilisation primitive en Italie*, pl. 323. 7) and Populonia (*MA* xxxiv, pl. 14. 9 and p. 355, fig. 23).³

3. For the small dish on the right of the top row in plate XIV, a, cf. *MA* xv, 172, fig. 71; 299–300, fig. 117 d–e; 314, fig. 124 e. Mr. W. L. Brown informs me that such vases are common in Southern Etruria. This may be a Greek or Italo-Greek vase of Italian manufacture.

The difference in time between the two early Greek cups may be of half-a-century or even more. In view of Mr. Ward Perkins' observation that the older vase, the Corinthian cup, is very worn and had been considerably used in antiquity, it is likely enough that the two were deposited in the tomb at the same time. This will have been somewhere near the middle of the seventh century.

Greek vases of the eighth century have been found at Carthage: an amphora, most probably Cycladic of the second half of the eighth century (P. Cintas, *Céramique punique*, pp. 493 ff., figs. 23–4 and pl. LXV. 1, LXVI; cf. P. Demargne, *RA* xxxviii, 1951, 50); and other vases, including Protocorinthian kotylai (Cintas, *op. cit.*, pl. LXV; D. B. Harden, *Iraq* iv, 87, fig. 8 b) from the sanctuary of Tanit; a Protocorinthian globular aryballos (Cintas, *op. cit.*, p. 456) from a grave. So far as I know, no bird-bowls have been found there, but this may be due to the accident of discovery, for bird-bowls have a very wide distribution. It is, therefore, likely enough that the Greek vases of the eighth and seventh centuries found in Malta were brought there from Carthage. It is, likewise, possible that they came from the neighbouring Greek cities of Sicily, Syracuse or Gela. The question is perhaps not of great importance, in view of M. Cintas' demonstration (*op. cit.*, pp. 559 ff.) that the beginnings of Greek and Phoenician colonisation in the eighth century were contemporary and complementary, and more closely associated than used to be believed.

T. J. DUNBABIN

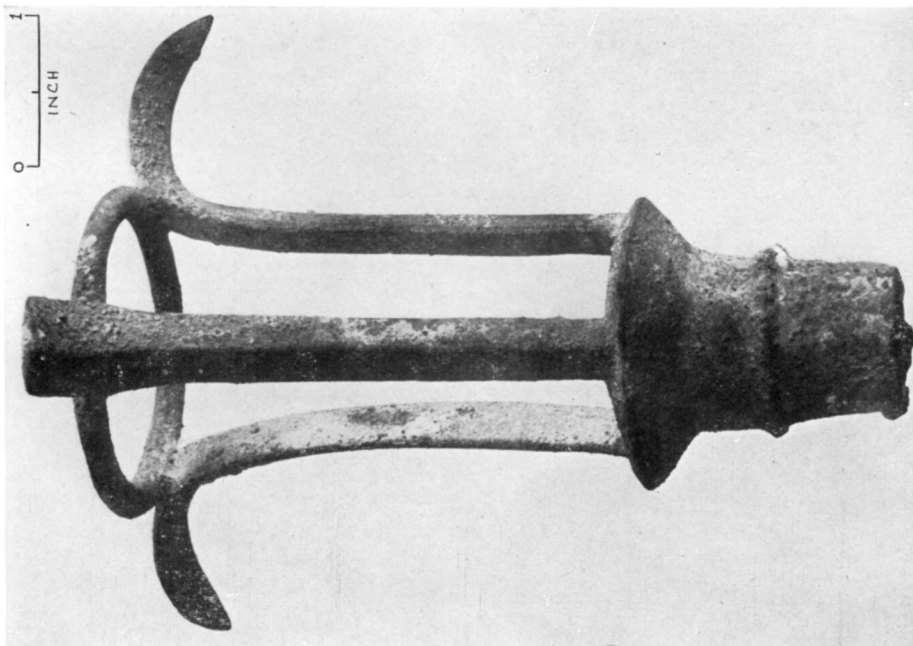
³ Another bird-bowl found in Italy is in Copenhagen, *CVA* ii, pl. 79. 7.

Another from Populonia, in Florence, associated with Protocorinthian vases of the second quarter of the seventh century, appears to be an Italian imitation.

Pinza refers (*RM* xxii, 133, n. 1) to a bird-bowl from Chiusi, but none is illustrated or described in *AdI* 1877, to which he refers. The cup *MA* xv, pl. 9. 13, is not a bird-bowl.



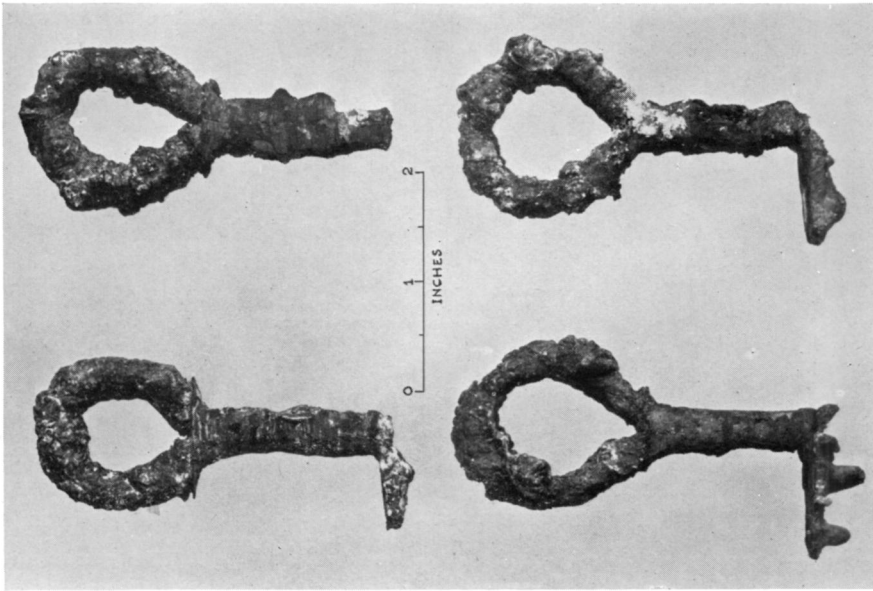
ROCK TOMB AT GHAJN QAJJET, MALTA: LIMESTONE SLAB AND REMAINS OF SKELETONS (p. 32)
(Valletta Museum)



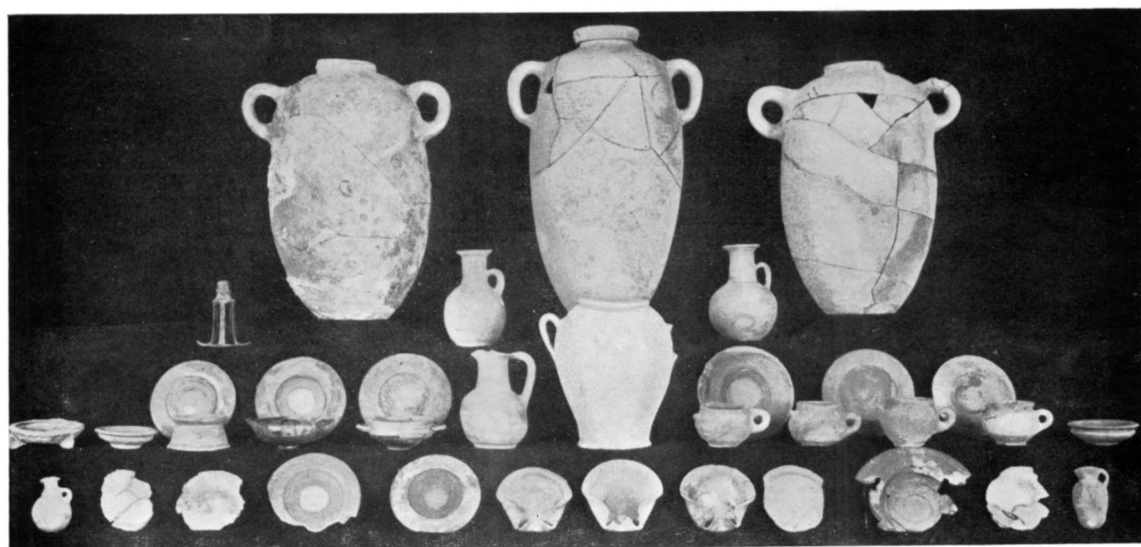
a. BRONZE LAMP-STAND (p. 37)

ROCK TOMB AT GHAJN QAJJET, MALTA

(Photos: *Valletta Museum*)



b. IRON LOOPS FOUND BY MALE SKELETON (p. 34)



a. POTTERY AND LAMPS

(Valletta Museum)



b. CORINTHIAN CUP (p. 39)

(Valletta Museum)



c. EAST GREEK BIRD BOWL (p. 40)

(Valletta Museum)

ROCK TOMB AT GHAJN QAJJET, MALTA